

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03252 140820Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 150712Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3359

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

INFO USINT BAGHDAD

S E C R E T BEIRUT 3252

EXDIS

EO 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR IG IR

SUBJ: KURDISH/IRANIAN RELATIONS

1. THIS MAY BE OLD HAT TO EMBASSY TEHRAN, BUT LOCAL SOURCE WHO HAS DIRECT ACCESS TO BARZANI AND KDP HIGH COMMAND TELLS US THAT BARZANI WAS VISITED MAR 5 IN TEHRAN BY SAVAK CHIEF GEN NASIRI. LATTER TOLD BARZANI IN BLUNTEST IMAGINABLE TERMS THAT (A) BORDER BETWEEN IRAN AND NORTHERN IRAQ WAS BEING CLOSED TO ALL RPT ALL MOVEMENT, (B) KURDS COULD EXPECT NO MORE ASSISTANCE FROM IRAN, (C) BARZANI SHOULD SETTLE WITH BAGHDAD REGIME ON WHATEVER TERMS HE COULD GET, AND (D) PESH MERGA UNITS WOULD BE ALLOWED TO TAKE REFUGE IN IRAN ONLY IN SMALL GROUPS AND ONLY IF THEY SURRENDERED THEIR ARMS TO IRANIAN ARMY.

2. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, BARZANI REACTED STOICALLY TO NASIRI'S REMARKS, BUT MAHMOUD OTHMAN BERATED NASIRI ROUNDLY FOR HIS "IMPUDENCE" AND FOR SHAH'S "BETRAYAL" OF KURDISH CAUSE. WITH BARZANI NODDING APPROVAL, OTHMAN VOWED KURDS WOULD NOT GIVE UP THEIR STRUGGLE AGAINST IRAQI FORCES AND HINTED STRONGLY THAT IRANIAN KURDS COULD BE EXPECTED CAUSE TROUBLE FOR SHAH. AFTER NASIRI LEFT, BARZANI REPORTEDLY TOLD HIS AIDES TO SEND MESSAGE TO HAJJ UMRAN DIRECTING THAT KDP "CONTINGENCY PLAN" PREPARED MANY MONTHS AGO FOR THIS EVENTUALITY BE SENT IN MOTION.

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3. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, BARZANI'S "CONTINGENCY PLAN"

CONSISTS OF MAJOR SHIFT IN KURDISH TACTICS AGAINST IRAQI ARMY. INSTEAD OF FIGHTING CONVENTIONAL WAR ALONG WELL-DEFINED "FRONT" IN NORTHERN IRAQ, PESH MERGA WOULD SPLIT INTO SMALL ROVING GROUPS, INFILTRATE FROM MOUNTAINS INTO LOW-LYING AREAS FURTHER SOUTH, AND WAGE ALL-OUT GUERRILLA WARFARE AGAINST IRAQI GARRISONS IN MAJOR TOWNS, CUT KEY ROADS AND ALSO STRIKE AT HITHERTO SACROSANCT OIL INSTALLATIONS. SOURCE CLAIMS BARZANI TOLD HIM RECENTLY THAT PESH MERGA HAVE ENOUGH ARMS AND MUNITIONS TO CONDUCT LARGE-SCALE GUERRILLA OPERATIONS IN THIS MANNER FOR "SEVERAL YEARS".

4. SOURCE INDICATED FOREGOING WAS BASED ON INFO HE RECEIVED THREE DAYS AGO AND THAT HE HEARD THIS MORNING (MAR 13) THAT BARZANI--DESPITE NASIRI'S EARLIER ASSERTIONS--HAS RETURNED TO IRAQI KURDISTAN. BEFORE DOING SO, HE REPORTEDLY RECEIVED APOLOGY FROM SHAH FOR NASIRI'S "CRUDE BEHAVIOR". SOURCE SPECULATES THAT SHAH HAS BECOME OUTRAGED AT IRAQI REGIME'S LAUNCHING OF MAJOR NEW OFFENSIVE AGAINST PESH MERGA ON MAR 5, A MOVE WHICH HE APPARENTLY REGARDS AS VIOLATION OF HIS AGREEMENT WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN IN ALGIERS. SOURCE FURTHER SPECULATES THAT SHAH MAY HAVE BEGUN TO THINK TWICE ABOUT IDING SCRUPULOUSLY BY LETTER OF HIS AGREEMENT WITH IRAQI RULER. HE ALSO CLAIMS THAT SYRIANS, SAUDIS AND EVEN LIBYANS ARE UPSET OVER SHAH'S ABRUPT RAPPROACHMENT WITH BAGHDAD AND THAT SARG WILL PROBABLY REACT BY STEPPING UP FLOW OF SUPPLIES TO BARZANI FROM NORTHERN SYRIA. GODLEY

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